

SOVIETS-AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE

WASHINGTON (AP)--PENTAGON SOURCES SAY THE SOVIET UNION APPARENTLY IS BUILDING A SECOND HELICOPTER CARRIER AND SUGGEST THE SOVIETS MAY BE BENT ON DEVELOPING A SIGNIFICANT AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE FORCE. THE SOURCES INTERPRETED THE DEVELOPMENT AS A SIGN THE SOVIETS MAY BE BELATEDLY TAKING A LEAF OUT OF THE AMERICAN BOOK AND BUILDING A FORCE THAT COULD INTERVENE WITH MARINE-LIKE TROOPS IN OVERSEAS CRISES.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW VESSEL REPORTEDLY IS IN ITS EARLY STAGES, BUT PENTAGON EXPERTS SAID IT APPEARS TO BE A HELICOPTER CARRIER LIKE THE FIRST SUCH SOVIET SHIP WHOSE EXISTENCE WAS DISCLOSED PUBLICLY ONLY ABOUT A MONTH AGO.

THE FIRST HELICOPTER CARRIER, ABOUT 600 FEET LONG AND LESS THAN 30,000 TONS, IS BEING OUTFITTED NEAR ODESSA IN THE BLACK SEA, THE SOURCES SAID. THE SECOND CARRIER IS BEING BUILT

IN THE SAME

PLACE.

THE RISE OF SOVIET INTEREST IN AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE HAS BEEN A MATTER OF CONCERN FOR THE UNITED STATES AND FOR ITS NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION PARTNERS.

SINCE THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR LAST JUNE, THE SOVIETS HAVE MAINTAINED A FLEET OF MORE THAN 45 WARSHIPS AND SUPPORTING VESSELS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. FIVE OF THESE SHIPS ARE AMPHIBIOUS TYPES.

COUPLED WITH THIS IS THE EVIDENT ATTENTION THE SOVIETS ARE GIVING TO THEIR "NAVAL INFANTRY," ROUGHLY A COUNTERPART OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS.

AFTER AN ON-AGAIN, OFF-AGAIN HISTORY, THE SOVIET NAVAL INFANTRY APPARENTLY WAS REVIVED A LITTLE MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO. ESTIMATES NOW PLACE ITS STRENGTH AT ONLY ABOUT 3,000--ROUGHLY 1 PER CENT OF THE SIZE OF THE MARINE CORPS.

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